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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of elementary school students in selected schools of Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota toward the world, China, India, and Nigeria are investigated. The study includes a review of related literature, a review of existing research on children's attitudes toward American and other nations, and recording and interpreting approximately 300 children's perceptions by means of a survey. The investigators arbitrarily selected four words that are currently included in the elementary school curricula--the world, China, India, and Nigeria--to be listed on the survey sheet. This sheet is an open-ended type of questionnaire which leaves space for the student's verbal or written response. The investigators chose responses which were typical of the various grade levels and wrote an interpretation of the various perceptions of the children. Among the conclusions the investigators found that children do appear to increase in objective understanding of others as they move into the intermediate grades, but that they do exhibit stereotyped images throughout every grade level. The report contains six recommendations for consideration by educators that deal with recognition of students' stereotyped images and development of course materials to increase student appreciation of cultural diversity. A bibliography is included. (Author/DB)

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An Investigation of Elementary Children's Perceptions of Selected Countries of the World

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C.E.E.
R.W.W.

INTRODUCTION

"What we teach children about the world, and how we teach it, depends on the image we ourselves have of our international system and our knowledge of the existing orientations of the students."[1] Children of today no longer grow up in an isolated corner, unaffected by what takes place around them. Our children now participate in an ever-increasing range of circumstances. Their interest in television alone helps to feed a curiosity about people and places and brings them in contact with events throughout the world.[2] It seems essential then, to develop in children a sense of living in a global community in which they recognize their own culture as one among many cultures, each with its own resources and contributions.

RATIONALE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

In recent years a great deal has been done to improve the international dimension of elementary and secondary education in the United States. Increased emphasis is being placed upon the study of the so-called "non-Western world".[3] Curriculum developers

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[1]Judith V. Torney and Donald N. Morris, *Global Dimensions in U. S. Education: The Elementary School* (New York: Center for War/Peace Studies, 1972), p. 2.

[2]Thomas L. Bernard and George E. Urch, "The World and the Elementary Classroom," *The Social Studies*, October, 1972, pp. 222-223.

[3]James M. Becker, *The Foreign Policy Association's Study of the Objectives, Needs, and Priorities in International Education in U. S. Secondary and Elementary Schools*, A Report to the United States Office of Education on Project 6-2908, 1969.

and teachers are beginning to show a growing interest in cross-national and cross-cultural studies. Some efforts are being made to provide materials which "expose students to non-American perceptions and interpretations of American life and U. S. involvement in the world community."[4]

Anderson states that:

> Much of our past and present teaching is grounded on an image of the world as a mosaic of richly varied lands and peoples. International education has been largely a matter of instructing the young about many colorful lands and peoples other than ourselves--of providing them with some information about the different ecologies, the particular histories and the unique cultures. . . .[5]

However, he suggests that this view is not necessarily incorrect, but may be incomplete as it presents a greatly oversimplified picture of the international dimension of education.

Robert Harper's observations about a global view of education in geography have particular relevance for international education.

> The whole world is more important than its parts. It is the understanding of the world-wide system of humanity living on the earth that we want the student to grasp, not just an understanding of the parts. . . .
> The region is no longer primarily important in itself. The important thing is to see how it fits into the larger world system.
> Of course, to understand the world as a whole, we must scrutinize the parts, but the aim is to see the part in the context of the bigger whole.[6]

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[4]Becker, op. cit.

[5]Lee F. Anderson, "An Examination of the Structure and Objectives of International Education," *Social Education*, November, 1968, p. 639.

[6]Robert A. Harper, "Geography's Role in General Education," *Journal of Geography*, April, 1966, p. 179.

The unity, wholeness or interdependence of the modern world is manifest in a number of ways. There is, first of all, a rapidly emerging world-wide system of human interaction. Harper observes, "throughout most of history, mankind did exist in separate, almost isolated, cultural islands . . . now most of humanity is a part of a single world-wide system."[7] There seems to be a growing globalization of economic and military interdependence. Organizations and associations have expanded across national and geographic boundaries. There is evidence of increasing similarity in mankind's social behaviors and institutions. The interdependence of the modern world is also seen in the internationalization of social problems such as pollution, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the plundering of the planet's mineral resources.[8]

Ward summarizes the need for education in a global community in this manner:

> In short, we have become single human community. . . We have become neighbors in terms of inescapable physical proximity and instant communication. We are neighbors in economic interest and technological direction. We are neighbors in facets of our industrialization and in the pattern of our urbanization. Above all, we are neighbors in the risk of total destruction.[9]

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[7]Harper, op. cit., p. 182

[8]Lee F. Anerson, "Education and Social Science in the Context of an Emerging Global Society," *International Dimensions in the Social Studies*, Thirty-eighth Yearbook, eds., James M. Becker and Howard D. Mehlinger (Washington, D C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1968), pp. 82-84.

[9]Barbara Ward, *Spaceship Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 19666), p. 14.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

The implications of a global system are significant for education.

> Schools must help young people to develop an international understanding, not an international understanding in the way we've traditionally used it--the sort of strange-lands-and friendly-people approach. Instead students must be led toward the understanding of the world as a single unit so that schools will be, in effect, transmitting to the next generation a rich image of the earth.[10]

From the moment of birth the child in all cultures is encouraged to be ethnocentric--to believe his homeland, his people, his language, his everything is not only different, but is superior to those of other people.[11]

A study was conducted in the early 1950's by Jean Piaget and Anne Marie Weil concerning the development in children of the idea of homeland and of relations with other countries. Piaget and Weil wondered "whether the cognitive and affective attitudes associated with loyalty to homeland and initial contacts with other countries may not be at the root of subsequent international maladjustments."[12]

In analyzing the investigation of Piaget and Weil, one becomes increasingly aware that children gradually develop a concept of homeland or their own national group in part, through comparisons and

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[10]David C. King, *International Education for Spaceship Earth*, Foreign Policy Association, 1970.

[11]Seymour H. Fersh, "Studying Other Cultures: Looking Outward is 'In'." *International Dimensions in the Social Studies*, Thirty-eighth Yearbook, eds., James M. Becker and Howard D. Mehlinger (Washington, D C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1968), p. 132.

[12]Jean Piaget and Anne Marie Weil, "The Development in Children of the Idea of the Homeland and of Relations with Other Countries," *International Social Science Bulletin*, 1951, p. 561.

contrasts. In other words, an American child learns what it is to be American by having his own group compared and contrasted with other national or cultural groups. This begins at home, early in the child's life, as he hears his parents talk about his group or as he watches television. Hess and Torney suggest that by the third grade, more than 90 percent of the 13,000 children questioned in 1962 in a nationwide study of political socialization agreed with the statement "America is the best country in the world."[13]

In an investigation of prejudice conducted by Morse and Allport, "an exaggerated loyalty to one's own group was by far the most important single cause of discrimination and exclusion."[14] Allport recognized this as the first stage in learning prejudice. Morse and Allport have suggested that these early experiences may very likely establish basic predispositions toward one's own group and foreign peoples that will manifest themselves throughout life.[15]

After a comprehensive study of children's views of foreign peoples, Lambert and Klineberg suggest three possible results of early contrasts and comparisons.

1. The process of establishing the concept of one's own group apparently produces an exaggerated and caricatured view of this group and people. Since the child's own group is repeatedly compared with other groups, it becomes the focus of the developing

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[13]Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), p. 26.

[14]Nancy C. Morse and Floyd H. Allport, "The Causation of Anti-Semitism: An Investigation of Seven Hypotheses," *Journal of Psychology*, 1952, p. 225.

[15]Ibid.

conception, and its salient characteristics are magnified and stereotyped. Even at age six, children made stereotyped statements about their own group.

2. The early training in national contrasts appears to mark certain groups as outstanding examples of people who are different.

3. The early training in contrasts appears to leave the impression with children that foreign peoples are different, strange, and unfriendly.[16]

Children in the early elementary years have fewer preconceptions about the world and are not as likely to screen out information contrary to their evaluations and beliefs. By the time a child has finished elementary school, however, he is likely to have developed a considerably more rigid perspective about his own way of doing things, his own culture, his own country. A child with such a perspective may be less receptive to the international view than a child who has not yet developed such a rigid outlook.[17]

There seems to be general agreement that perspectives are shaped early in life and that the groundwork for adult attitudes and actions are built during the years of childhood and youth. King presents the following conclusion:

> We are preparing young children for the future. We must begin when children are young--before the prejudices of the wider society have been internalized --to develop a sense of global responsibility.[18]

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[16]Wallace E. Lambert and Otto Klineberg, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 223-224.

[17]Torney and Morris, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

[18]Edith W. King, *Worldmindedness: The World, Context for Teaching in the Elementary School* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, Company, 1971), p. 13.

Because children now in our elementary schools will live in a world tomorrow that will be even more rapidly changing, more complex, and more ambiguous than that of today, world affairs education can no longer be an incidental part of the curriculum.

Morris and King comment:

> When children are able to see the common problems, as well as the common hopes and joys, shared by all human beings, and see them from a global frame of reference, they are well on the way toward developing the capacity to widen their existing hierarchy of loyalties and accept membership in the world community.[19]

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In an attempt to make meaningful learning in international education possible, one first needs to learn about the way in which children perceive the world, their stereotypes about it, and the assumptions which underlie their attitudes. This study will direct its attention to an investigation of children's perceptions toward the world, China, India and Nigeria. One cannot come to terms with views of the world on the basis of an overall survey; rather, what is required is a detailed study of perceptions toward micro-parts of that global system.

The evidence available shows a definite need for education in international studies. The limited number of studies concerning children's attitudes of foreign peoples indicate that elementary school children already do have ideas about the nation and the world.

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[19] Donald N. Morris and Edith W. King, "Bringing Spaceship Earth into the Elementary School Classrooms," *Social Education*, November, 1968, p. 680.

It seems quite appropriate then, to help children develop a larger frame of reference, one which will prepare them for living in a world of diversity, valuing their own culture while respecting other cultures.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

It is the purpose of this study to determine the perceptions that first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade children in selected schools of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota hold toward the world, China, India and Nigeria.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

ATTITUDE. A construct which refers to a learned predisposition to think or act in a certain evaluative way toward a specific object, person, idea, or situation.[20]

BIAS. A tendency to weight a situation in favor of some interest or value at the expense of others.[21]

ETHNOCENTRISM. An attitude and/or ideology concerning the relationship between an individual's group and other groups. Usually positive characteristics of the subject's (sociological or informal) group are strongly emphasized, while features and members of other groups are judged in terms of standards applicable to the subject's group. An easy rejection of unfamiliar things is characteristic of ethnocentrism, which therefore becomes a component of general prejudice.[22]

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[20]John T. Zadrozny, *Dictionary of Social Science* (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959), p. 20.

[21]Carter V. Good, ed., *Dictionary of Education* (3d ed., New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 477.

[22]H. J. Eysenck, W. Arnold, and R. Meili, *Encyclopedia of Psychoology I* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 336.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION. Many terms are being used to describe this emphasis in education: global system, world-mindedness, non-Western studies, inter-cultural studies. In the context of this study the following definition will be used. International education consists of those social experiences and learning processes through which individuals acquire and change their orientations to international or world society and their conceptions of themselves as members of that society.[23]

PREJUDICE. An antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group.[24]

STEREOTYPE. An exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category. A stereotype may be positive or negative.[25]

ELEMENTARY STUDENT PERCEPTUAL SURVEY SHEET. A questionnaire designed to collect the children's perceptions of the world, China, India and Nigeria.

DELIMITATIONS

The contributions this study might be expected to make with regard to international education are subject to the following delimitations.

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[23]Lee F. Anderson and James M. Becker, "Improving International Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools: A Study of Research and Development Needs," *International Studies Quarterly*, September, 1968, p. 342.

[24]Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1954), p. 9.

[25]Ibid., p. 191.

1. The study was limited to children in grades first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth of seventeen selected schools of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota.

2. The study was restricted to a sample of 300 children in grades first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth of selected schools of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota.

3. The Elementary Student Perceptual Survey Sheet was limited to the perceptions, attitudes and knowledge that children hold toward the world, China, India and Nigeria.

4. The study was limited to a time period from October, 1974, to April, 1975.

5. The interpretation of the children's responses were based on the investigators' knowledge of the various words and their knowledge of child growth and development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section will present a review of literature pertaining to the development of children's attitudes and stereotypes of foreign people. Research in the area of children's orientation to people in a global society is limited. Five selected research studies have gained considerable attention in the development of international images among children. These studies will be used as background for the present study.

The organization of the content of this section has been subdivided into two major areas. The first part is a presentation of Piaget's influence on the cognitive development of children's international attitudes. A study conducted by Piaget and Weil concerning the development of the idea of homeland and the concept

of relations with other countries will be described. The second part will deal with children's attitudes toward America and other nations. Four research studies which have contributed to a better understanding of children's national and international attitudes will be reviewed: a study of Hess and Torney, a pilot study conducted by Judith Torney, a large-scale, cross-national study of children's international orientations conducted by Lambert and Klineberg, and a project conducted by Beyer and Hicks.

PIAGET AND THE COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF CHILDREN'S INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDES

Piaget's influence has most frequently been cited in reference to the development of intelligence. His main concern has been in determining how knowledge develops and changes. He has also contributed to the understanding of how children's international attitudes develop.

In 1951 Piaget and Weil published the results of a study conducted in Switzerland. The study was concerned with the development of the idea of homeland and the concept of relations with other countries among Swiss children. Their study demonstrated the parallel development of both the cognitive and affective aspects of these attitudes. At stage I, ages 6-7, children showed evidence of cognitive and affective egocentricity. At stage II, ages 7-8-9, results indicated that logical and affective decentration was beginning; however the children still tended to accept the ideas and attitudes of the family. At stage III, ages 10-11, children demonstrated the beginnings of an objective understanding of other peoples. Piaget refers to this capacity to place oneself in the

position of children in other countries as reciprocity. He suggests that reciprocity is essential for adequate development of international attitudes in children.[1]

Piaget also has suggested that as children develop cognitively they take on qualitatively different ways of looking at the world. As children develop they not only have more information, but they have different ways of looking at evidence, of processing information, of formulating propositions, and of testing them. Piaget concluded that children of middle childhood are ready to have a dynamic, process-oriented world rather than a reliance on the status quo. Stage II, ages 7-8-9-10, seemed to be a particularly important time for the introduction of information since children are curious and receptive at these ages, and since stage II is particularly important in the the development of reciprocity. The exposure to such information should enable the child to discover the similarities among all people.

Piaget concluded his paper with this challenge:

> The main problem is not to determine what must or must not be inculcated in the child; it is to discover how to develop that reciprocity in thought and action which is vital to the attainment of impartiality and affective understanding.[2]

Jahoda, in 1964, tried to replicate Piaget's study among Scottish children. The trends and processes found were basically

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[1]Jean Piaget and Anne Marie Weil, "The Development in Children of the Idea of the Homeland and of Relations with Other Countries," *International Social Science Bulletin*, 1951, pp. 563-567.

[2]Ibid., p. 579.

the same as those discovered by Piaget.[3] Scottish children's ideas about nationality reflected cognitive developmental stages instead of the accumulation of facts. Jahoda commented that Scottish children had acquired "bits and pieces" of information which reflected the exotic and unusual aspects of African and East Indian cultures. He concluded that strangeness, at least for Scottish children, often seemed to be associated with differences in pigmentation and language.[4]

In a doctoral study conducted by Robert A. Wheeler at the University of North Dakota in 1969, an attempt was made to determine when children can internalize concepts of home, state, and nation. Using a Piagetian model modified for the North Dakota study, Wheeler found that there was no significant difference between North Dakota students in grades one through six and Swiss children in the conception of nationalism.[5]

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICA AND OTHER NATIONS

Because there is little information available concerning children's attitudes toward America and other nations, that which

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[3]G. Jahoda, "Children's Concepts of Nationality a Critical Study of Piaget's Stages," *Child Development*, Vol. 35, 1964, pp. 1081-1092.

[4]G. Jahoda, "The Development of Children's Ideas about Country and Nationality, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 33, 1963, pp. 47-61, 143-153.

[5]Robert A. Wheeler, "The Conception of Nationalism in Elementary School Children of North Dakota," (Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1970).

exists is of particular importance. Research that is available indicates that early training in contrasts appears to leave the impression that foreign people are different, strange, and unfriendly.[6] In most if not all national settings children have experiences with distinctive ethnic or religious sub-groups. They are confronted with the problem of trying to understand these local sub-groups about the same time they are starting to learn who they are themselves. During this time parents and other important people may transfer their own views and labels of other people to the child before he is able to comprehend them.

HESS AND TORNEY

Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney studied the development of political attitudes in American children. They have described the growth of nationalism as occurring in three stages which seem to parallel Piaget's three stages. In stage I the flag and the Statue of Liberty stood out as national symbols; the concept of nation was not well understood. In stage II children had acquired some idea of the concept of nation, including some abstract qualities. Less emphasis was placed on concrete aspects of the country and more emphasis was placed on "freedom" and "right to vote." By stage III our country was seen as part of a larger organized system of countries.[7]

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[6]Elizabeth J. Yerxa, "Attitude Development in Childhood Education toward Foreign People," *Journal of Education*, February, 1970, p. 28.

[7]Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 28-30.

Young children's involvement with the political system begins with a strong positive attachment to the country; the United States is seen as ideal and superior to other countries. This attachment is stable and shows almost no change through elementary school, concluded Hess and Torney.

They concluded that the school apparently plays the most important role in the development of attitudes, conceptions and beliefs about the political system. The home's task, according to Hess and Torney, is to support other institutions in teaching political orientation.[8]

Results of their study indicated that most attitudes, concepts, and other basic orientations of political socialization have been acquired by the end of eighth grade. Some attitudes, such as attachment to the nation are acquired early. The period between grades three and five seems to be especially important in the acquisition of information and attitudes. Before this time, concepts such as government may evoke some recognition, but only an understanding of their most elementary aspects.[9]

TORNEY

In 1969 Judith V. Torney conducted a pilot study on attitudes of children concerning international topics. Thirty-seven children in grades one through seven were interviewed. The author attempted to arrive at some tentative findings on how attitudes toward other people and nations are formed and what role language plays in this

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[8]Hess and Torney, op. cit., p. 216.

[9]Ibid., p. 221.

formation.[10] Results of this study indicated that other countries were considered different than their own country because of a difference in language; this response was spontaneously cited by more than 70 percent of the children at all ages. She concluded that "the perception of one's own language as a part of oneself appears to have an impact on the development of feelings about one's own language group, influencing the belief that one is different from or the same as others outside and within one's country."[11]

Other conclusions made by Torney as a result of this study are:

1. Group membership influences the attitudes held by children.

2. A relationship exists between international attitudes and the cognitive process.

3. Native language has an influence on the formation of attitudes toward people and nations.

4. Attitudes already held toward subjects of interest to the children influence the formation of international attitudes.

LAMBERT AND KLINEBERG

In 1967 Wallace E. Lambert and Otto Klineberg undertook an ambitious study of the content and development of children's views of foreign people. This was a large-scale, cross-national study which was based on information received from 3,300 children at three age levels (6, 10, and 14 years) from eleven parts of the

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[10]Judith V. Torney, "Research on the Development of International Orientations during Childhood and Adolescence," A paper presented at the American Political Science Association, Washington, D. C., September, 1969.

[11]Ibid.

world. Interviews using identical questionnaires were used to obtain the data. Among the most important questions asked were those aimed at finding out whether children perceived a country as similar or different from their own. Responses of all children in the eleven countries were compiled and analyzed. The sample of American children perceived the Chinese, Indians from India, Negroes from Africa, and Russians as being different from themselves.[12] Younger children tended either to give no response or to determine similarity or difference on the basis of clothing, physical appearance, or language. Ten-year-old children often referred to habits and material possessions, while fourteen-year-olds tended to focus on political characteristics.

Television, movies and to a lesser extent, parents were listed as the major sources of information about foreign peoples by six-year-olds. At ten, children mentioned television, movies, and school; at fourteen, school sources of information predominated. Mass media was indicated to be the main source of information about African Negroes and Russians.[13]

Lambert and Klineberg have proposed that early views children form of themselves and their own national group greatly influence their views of foreigners. Children appear to develop a group identity and self-concept first by comparing and contrasting the differences between themselves and foreign people. Children at

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[12]Wallace E. Lambert and Otto Klineberg, *Children's Views of Foreign Peoples* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 34.

[13]Ibid., p. 213.

age six tended to stress the differences between peoples, lack of affection for others, and expressed exaggerated national loyaltie

> The first signs of stereotyped thinking turned up in the description children gave of their own group rather than of foreign people; even at age six many different national groups of children made over-generalized statements about the personality traits of their own group at the same time as they described foreign people in more objective terms.[14]

Comparable stereotypes of other nations did not appear until after age ten.

Based on the results of their study Lambert and Klineberg have concluded that the stereotyping process appears to get its start in the early overgeneralized conceptions children develop of their own group. Early training in national contrasts leaves durable "scratches on our minds" that color our reactions to foreign people throughout our lives. The ten-year-old child is most inquisitive and friendly toward foreign people and prone to see them as similar than either the six or fourteen-year-old commented Lambert and Klineberg. By age fourteen, these same young people appeared less open to positive views of foreign nations

They have also concluded that parents and other important people transfer their own emotionally-toned views of other people to the child "by assigning specific attributes to members of particular groups" during a time of cognitive development when he has not fully differentiated one group from another or even his own group from others.[15]

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[14]Lambert and Klineberg, op. cit., pp. 223-224.

[15]Ibid., p. 227.

BEYER AND HICKS

Barry K. Beyer and E. Perry Hicks collected information on attitudes of 3,259 seventh and twelfth graders in twenty-eight school districts throughout the United States. They developed a World Regions Perception Survey, consisting of a 9 x 16 inch outline map divided into seven labeled regions (North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa South of the Sahara, Russia, and Asia). Accompanying the map were 90 cards, each containing a different word or phrase, some selected because they might be part of a stereotype of Sub-Saharan Africa, some associated with other parts of the world, others with modern industrial society, and others could apply to any region. The students were to place each card on the region of the world he thought it best described.[16]

The original purpose of the Hicks and Beyer study had been to determine the stereotypes which children have about Sub-Saharan Africa. From their World Perceptions Instrument they determined that American seventh graders, in thinking about Africa South of the Sahara, focused on such characteristics as "wild animals," "witch doctors," "drums," "jungles," "tigers," "spears," "tribes," "natives," and "cannibals."[17] On a test of factual information, they found that seventh grade children have very limited accurate information about

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[16]Barry K. Beyer and E. Perry Hicks, "Images of Africa: A Report on What American Secondary School Students Know and Believe about Africa South of the Sahara," Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Prepared for the U. S. Office of Education, 1968.

[17]Barry K. Beyer, *Africa, South of the Sahara: A Resource and Curriculum Guide* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), p. 10.

Africa. Results of twelfth grade tests indicated that they had a more stereotyped view of Africa after five years of schooling. This suggests that American students not only have distorted views of Africa and its people, but that between seventh and twelfth grade they are learning more misinformation.[18]

Conclusions of the study are worth quoting, since they may partly be generalized to apply to children's attitudes toward parts of the world other than Africa:

> The misinformation that students have about Africa may come primarily from the popular media. Students may never have heard of Africa's Sudanic kingdoms, but they probably have heard of Tarzan. . . . If a student has seen numerous drawings or animated cartoons of missionaries in the cooking pot with savages dancing around the fire, but has never seen a photograph of an African farmer or fisherman, he will not have a balanced image of the region. . . . The problem with instructional materials is usually less one of accuracy of information, than it is one of lack of balance and up-to-dateness in the information presented, for what may have been true of Africa five years age may very well not be true of it today.
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> Lack of balance is especially noticeable in the elementary grades. Here instruction about Africa south of the Sahara tends to focus on the strange and bizarre. There are very few pygmies in Africa in relation to the total population, yet they often are the only Africans studied by students in the grades. As a result, these students get the impression that pygmies are a major segment of the population--or, in some cases, the total population. Since pygmies live for the most part in rain forest areas, the image of Africa as a land covered by jungle is reinforced.[19]

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[18]Beyer, op. cit., p. 11.

[19]E. Hicks and Barry K. Beyer, "Images of Africa," *Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 39, 1970, p. 165.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are evident from the literature reviewed.

1. Early experiences of children may very likely establish predispositions towards one's own group and toward foreign people that will manifest themselves throughout life.

2. The beginning of prejudice and stereotypes are established before children are able to make evaluative judgments.

3. Stereotypes and attitudes of foreign people become more specific and stable as children overcome their egocentric orientation and develop cognitively.

4. Children can be taught most effectively if material is geared to their current understanding which is strongly influenced by aspects of cognitive development.

5. The research reviewed was concerned with the development of children's attitudes and stereotypes; no adequate research studies were available which concerned themselves with ways of changing or overcoming these attitudes and stereotypes.

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The following procedural steps were utilized in this investigation:

1. Selection of the sample.
2. Administration of the Perceptual Survey Sheet.
3. Recording of the children's perceptions.
4. Interpretation of the children's perceptions.
5. Summary and recommendations based upon this investigation.

THE SAMPLE

The first consideration to be met in the formulative stages of this study was to select the various cities and towns of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota that were to be utilized to gather the information needed in this study.

Letters were sent to principals of various elementary schools asking permission to conduct this research in their schools. After permission was gained, the names of the schools were listed on a master chart and each was assigned a number for identification purposes. From this population, a sample size of seventeen elementary schools were drawn to make up the sample for this study. The following cities or towns are represented in this study:

Hawarden, Ia
North Sioux City, SD
Marty, SD
Wakonda, SD
Remsen, IA
Newkirk, IA
Sheldon, Ia
Yankton, SD
Vermillion, SD
Madison, SD
Centerville, SD
Jefferson, SD
Sioux City, Ia
South Sioux City, NB
Dakota City, IA
Watertown, SD
Orange City, IA

The next important procedure was to select the sample of students for this study. The population from which the sample would be drawn consisted of all children, grades one through six in the aforementioned elementary schools of the selected cities and towns. Grade levels of the schools were placed in a large container and two grade levels from each elementary school were drawn for participation in this study. These were the particular grade levels that were involved in the perceptual survey sheet. By this method, 1200 Perceptual Survey Sheets were completed by children enrolled in grades first through sixth in the selected elementary schools in cities and towns of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota.

The third step of the study was to select the particular Perceptual Survey Sheets to be analyzed to derive the conclusions and recommendations in this study. It was decided that fifty Perceptual Survey Sheets from each grade level, one through six, would be selected and analyzed to collect the data for analysis. Therefore, all grade one Perceptual Survey Sheets were combined into one group, the same for grades two through six. Each Perceptual Survey Sheet for the various grades was assigned a number which would assist in the selection process. By utilizing a table of random numbers, a sample size of fifty Perception Survey Sheets was selected for each grade level one through six. Therefore, a total of 300 boys and girls in grades one through six in selected elementary schools in Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota were selected as subjects in this investigation.

INSTRUMENTATION

The Elementary Student Perceptual Survey Sheet, included in the Appendix, was the source of data for this investigation. The Investigators arbitrarily selected four words that are currently included in curricula in the elementary school. The words selected were THE WORLD, CHINA, INDIA and NIGERIA. Three of the words deal with the non-Western world while the fourth word involves a total global perspective.

The Perceptual Survey Sheet is an open-ended type of questionnaire. After each word there is open space for the children's verbal or written responses.

The investigators decided that it would be appropriate to personally interview students in grades one and two, while the students in grades three through six have the writing skills necessary to express their perceptions and ideas of the word. Therefore, all of the students included in the sample in grades one and two were personally interviewed by the investigators. The students in grades three through six did their own writing.

The next major task in this research investigation was to select responses which were typical of the various grade levels and to write an interpretation of the various perceptions of the children.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS

The task of teaching a subject or a concept in terms of the child at any particular age is one of presenting the structure of the subject or concept in terms of the child's way of viewing things.

The work of Piaget and others suggest that one may distinguish several stages in the intellectual development of the child. How, then, can a teacher develop a meaningful curriculum centering around concepts of the world and at the same time consider the most effective means of expanding the cognitive and affective domains? To ask questions which focus on the concept is one effective method of developing a concept. Working together the student and teacher combine their efforts to build a curriculum or to develop a program based on the information which the student seeks and his responses to questions. Critical analysis of the youth's expressions can provide additional material that will aid the process of examining research and practices in the work of curriculum revision.

In an attempt to make meaningful learning in international education possible, one first needs to learn about the way in which children perceive the world, their stereotypes about it, and the assumptions which underlie their attitudes. This study has directed its attention to an investigation of children's perceptions toward the world, China, India and Nigeria.

The principal investigators and teachers in cities and towns of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota assisted in the collecting of children's responses or perceptions of the words THE WORLD, CHINA, INDIA and NIGERIA. The ages of the children and youth questioned ranged from six through twelve years. Methods used were personal interviews by the principal investigators and an open-ended Perceptual Survey Sheet developed by the investigators. One-thousand-two-hundred different children and youth from seventeen cities and towns participated. From this population 300 boys and girls were randomly selected to have their Perceptual Survey Sheets interpreted.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD

The following are typical responses made to the word THE WORLD:

FIRST GRADERS' COMMENTS:

It is big. Nice to live in. Lots of stars to go to. Trees. Cars. Grass. Houses. People. Schools. Nice place.

Bugs killing trees. Lots of people. It's sweet. Nice place.

Football. Basketball games. Fun. Lots of people in cities.

People like to see beautiful things, like flowers. Sun. Water.

All sorts of things. Clouds. Flowers. Grass. Big.

Lots of people. Lots of buildings. Lots of names. There's cars.

People go to school. A town. Has buildings. Stores. Grass.

Like everybody. Where everybody lives. What everybody lives in.

Where animals live. Big. Trees and people with houses.

Swing sets. Balloons. Lots of things. Houses. People.

People live in it. Things grow in it. People can build.

People get to know each other. People in the world. They grow food. There's schools in the world. The trees. Houses. Grass. The people. A good place. EVERYTHING!! Animals. The snow. Sky. Houses. Santa Claus. Christmas Tree.

SECOND GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Grandparents live in it. God is in it. People grow on it. People. Big. It's a nice place to live. People live here. Weather. We live on it. Something that people live on. God. Lots of people. All kinds of states and towns. Place where people live. Great big round ball and it has states and countries.

It kind of turns. Lots of water. Part of the universe. It has houses on it. People. Where we all live. Flowers. A round ball green with blue spots. Schools and homes. People live all around the planet earth. Where we live. A good place. It's nice. Pretty. Towns. People. Houses. Countries. Lots of houses. Christmas time. Round. Thanksgiving. Beautiful. Cars and trains. It is big. Like it's our world. It's a state. It's a big place where people live. Like a rock.

THIRD GRADERS' COMMENTS:

The corn and all the little beetles on the corn. Iowa; all the pigs and corn. The rain; the dew; the snow. Round. Turns. Big. Three oceans. South pole. North pole. Lots of states. Many people. That is where we live. It is big. Five seas. One equator. Fifty states. Four oceans. One South pole. One North pole. People speak a different language. The world is a lot of states but we live in the world in South Dakota. Our world is all around us. I live in the world. The planet I live on. Life. I feel happy. Seems that it is big. A lot of people. A round ball. The world is beautiful. There is a lot of cities and countries in the world. The world is big. Everyone lives in the world. To me the world is huge and it makes me feel happy to be alive and to make friends. It is a big beautiful place to live in. I'm glad I live in America. It is round. Columbus discovered it. It is more than 1,000 years old. I love the world. It is so huge and beautiful. It has so many places and I live in it. It is round. It's huge.

It turns around the Sun. People live on it. There is water and land. The masses or land are countries. It has a moon. It has air. It has mountains and flat land.

FOURTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

A large round planet. I like the world. The world is round. We live in the world. It is very big and has many states and countries. The world has many different ways of talking. A little round ball. A big round place full of exciting and interesting things to do. People, animals and flowers. Different people. I would like to visit all of the countries. One of God's creations. A lot of people and places. Something round like a ball. The world is made up of water and land. It is a good place to live. It's a place working together, loving each other and everything. The world is changing. The world is becoming polluted. It is a very special place with different people. What the 50 states are on. The earth and all the continents, seas and oceans. There are lots of people on the earth. The world means the whole planet that I live on. Where I live. Lots of poor people who need help. A great place to live. It has gods. The world reminds me of the poor and hungry people. I think of lots of people. People working for and helping each other. Lots of different people. I think of the states, people and other lands. Different colored people. I even think of animals because they live on the world. The world is a huge, sphere-shaped object.

FIFTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Some countries in the world are at war. The United States was at war, but we stopped it. Some of the other countries stopped too. Wars are bad! It's the only thing nice left. Like flowers, trees, animals (not counting humans). If people would think and not kill. Animals kill for food -- there's not a thing wrong with that. What about people? To me the world is a great place. We do have many problems, but in the future I hope they will be taken care of. It's big, and it's where we all live. There's an awful lot of people in the world, and a lot of them are starving. The world is the place we live on. It is huge, and I like it. I feel it is huge. The world is a great place for me. Things bad may go wrong on it, but I like it. The world is round. It's my home and yours. We have wars which I think should STOP!! I like the world. It is the only place to live. It's beautiful and polluted. I wish the world was CLEAN! People are greedy in the world and don't share that much. I think the world has many things wrong with it like the food costs so much to buy anything. I hope soon the price of food will go down. I think the world is getting overpopulated and polluted. Someday we may have to move to the moon or even under water or underground. The world was made for us by God. It is mostly covered by water. A great creation. A speck in the Universe. A complicated landscape. We live in part of the world, as you know, but; sometimes have you ever stopped to think what the world will be like when you grow up. It might be destroyed or still be here. I hope it will still be here when I grow up, don't you?

Love, joy and peace. It is a good world and a bad world. Sometimes fun and sometimes not. What God wanted us to have and a wonderful place.

SIXTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

It makes me think of what God created. I think of all the people in it. Millions of bustling people. The seven continents and all the countries. A large sphere. There are good and bad people. A place where people and animals live. Countries either helping each other or fighting. Many types of people--Christians, Jews, Black, White, Yellow, Red ruled by God. The world is in bad condition because there are wars, pollution and poverty. Lots of people. Many countries in the world. The world has mostly water with some land. Starving people. A home for us. The world is a lovely place. Something God made. A big place. A place of rich and poor. A place where people live whether they're white, black, good, bad, or from Africa or America. Very big and highly populated. Filled with action. Filled with sadness. A planet where there are many countries. Everybody is part of the world. Countries, people, states and capitols. It's big to us but it is like a grain of sand on a beach compared to the universe. It's where I live. Prices are rising on this earth. The world is for everyone, and that's what I like. There are many people on the earth, and that is why it is very difficult for people to live. A place where people have friendship and fun. It is large with many different kinds of people. Overpopulated. I wish the world would never end.

INVESTIGATORS' INTERPRETATIONS OF CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD

All comments of first grade children and second grade children were obtained by personally interviewing each child, thus allowing the investigators to further question the meaning of any particular child's comments. There were fewer opportunities to question the comments of children from the intermediate and upper elementary grades, as they responded primarily in written form; although there were a few instances where a teacher or one of the investigators did question further a particular child at these grade levels. It was not intended as part of the investigative procedure to ask the children to clarify their comments. In the few instances where it was done, it was accomplished out of a sense of curiosity on the part of the investigators more than anything else. Where it was felt that these responses by the children might be of interest they are included in this study in future pages.

Most of the children in the first grade and some of the children in second grade fall into the final stages of Piaget's second major period of intellectural development, the PREOPERATIONAL PERIOD, or stage. An examination of the responses of children in this study tends to indicate their intellectual development following Piaget's model. When the children were confronted with stimuli, such as the words THE WORLD, their responses fit schema described by Piaget for children at this level. The egocentric perspective characteristic of children of six and seven years of age is revealed through comments which seem to organize the concept of THE WORLD in terms of "my" immediate environment and "my" social experience. The

typical child at this age does not have sufficient maturity to perceive a concept as THE WORLD with objective reality. Responses such as TREES, GRASS, and GRANDPARENTS were typical, and the child who responded with SWING SETS did not stray too far from his neighborhood. The child who responded with FOOTBALL and BASKETBALL GAMES probably related that he and his father attended the local high school or university games and that he was going to be a football player. Even the seemingly sophisticated comment, PART OF THE UNIVERSE, upon further questioning turned out to be more a response learned by rote than part of a realistic schemata of cognitive structure of THE WORLD.

Comments elicited of children at the intermediate and upper elementary levels seemed to indicate a knowledge of THE WORLD approaching a more realistic cognitive structure as age increased. THE WORLD for third graders is a larger place and now may include MOUNTAINS as well as FLAT LAND. None of the children at the primary level had indicated mountains as a part of their world. That egocentrism is never completely eliminated in cognitive development at any stage may be seen in the response of the fourth grader who explained THE WORLD as WHERE THE FIFTY STATES ARE LOCATED. Comments by fifth and sixth grade children revealed concerns with problems facing the world, such as pollution and overpopulation. One sixth grader commented, "The world seems big to us, but it is like a grain of sand on a beach compared to the universe."

THE WORLD seems to be viewed by primary children in a positive sense. The children at this age level experience expressed themselves with positive words such as NICE, SWEET, GOOD, and BEAUTIFUL when they were asked to respond to the words THE WORLD. If from their

personal perspectives everything is beautiful, then for them it seems to follow that everything is also beautiful for THE WORLD. One first grader who commented that bugs were killing trees had recently viewed the removal of a huge diseased elm tree from the front yard of his parent's property. Further questioning revealed that it was the magnitude of this experience rather than any negative aspects which seemed to take on personal significance for him. For the upper-elementary children, THE WORLD is not always seen as a beautiful place. The world is viewed both as a place that is GREAT and as a place with PROBLEMS. People are seen as the cause of problems and also as the solution to problems. Some countries of the world are helping one another while others are fighting. Appeal is made to the Judeo-Christian ethic as one child called for people to thank and not kill each other.

CHILDRENS'S PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA

The following are typical responses made to the word CHINA:

FIRST GRADERS' COMMENTS:

The people. The houses. Food. Part of the world. It's a long ways away. King od like a state. Different people live in it. They are all different. Wooden houses. Good. Plates. Cups. Silverware. Where's a lot of bells ringing. There's snake charmers. China dolls. They have wars. Has swords. Cannon balls. Tents. Has all dirt. Who? They plant food. They live in houses. They paint pictures. Dishes. Part of a country. Black people live. They like to eat food. Place where people eat with sticks. Different language. Not bigger than America. Lots of people. It's tough. Doesn't break or

or bust. People wear round hats. Use to have masters. Little bit of gold. Funny hats. It is big. Nice to live in. Lot of stores to go to. Indians. Plates. Cups. Dishes. Soap. Heard about it on T.V. Country. Plates. Silverware and stuff. Town named China. There's two kinds: Chinese people or China dishes. They have eyes like this. (Child pulled on skin around eyes.) They talk different and their skin is different color. Talking not like our talking. China's under the dirt. Dishes. They're nice people.

SECOND GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Different faces. Skin is yellowish. Eat different food. Dad told me about China. Pretty. Karate. They eat with sticks. They talk a different language. A place where Chinese people live. House close together. House made out of straw. Different colored. Wear different clothes and shoes. Wear funny hats. I have a China doll. Different people talk different ways. Eat different food. Plates. China people live there. A city. People who talk different languages. They have pointed hats. They don't talk like we do. It has cities, and I think it's a state. It's like Japan. They have parades and parties. They dress up like dragons. Japanese. Chinese. Chopsticks. China people. The ground. Chinese people. Rice. Where people wear funny hats--my friend brought a hat back from Vietnam. Cities and people in the streets. A state. Like a big city. A place where people aren't Americans. Rice. A place far from here.

THIRD GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Chopsticks. The funny looking eyes of China and the long dresses they wear. The way China eats with their chopsticks. China is on the bottom of the globe. Chopsticks. Slanted eyes. China is a very surprising world. I like China because they eat lots of rice. China people look funny. A country in Asia. Different eyes. Speak Chinese. Dances. People speak different language. It would be a great place to go and it would be a fun place to stay. I like China. I think it is a wonderful place to be, and if someone asked me if I wanted to go I'd say sure! They eat rice and they use chopsticks and they do not use chairs. They wear kimonos and different kinds of shoes. I know one city in China and it is Hangchow. A place in Europe where they eat lots of rice. China is big. Tibet is in China. It has more people in its country than in our countries. To me China would be a good place to live, but sometimes I think China would be a bad place to live because they eat rice all the time and because it's hot. It is in Asia. It has panda bears. It is large. It has mountains. It is a country that has more people than any other country. It has large cities. It means to me very different kind of living. Little kids running around doing very different things. I know it is a very pretty country. China is the place where people have their eyes crooked. People live in China. China is a big place too. Yellow skin. Poor. Bare feet. Fish. Rice.

FOURTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

People are different. They are funny people to us. Their eyes are different from ours. People eat with chopsticks. Chinese people talk a different language. The Chinese people have funny eyes. They wear different clothes. They eat different food. They use chopsticks. Communists live in China. A place where interesting people live. Silk and pretty clothes. Different language. I would like to eat with chopsticks. Dishes and china are pretty things. They talk different and look different. Different people. Chinese eat rice. Many different foods from America. There is rice and pretty silk. Chinese food is really good. Pretty silk. A place where they have different symbols, different customs and is in the far east. Chinese eyes. They know Kung Fu and karate. China is a country in Asia. Communist China. There is a very long and old wall in China. It seems like a weird place to me. They eat with chopsticks. China is weird to me. A person eating with chopsticks. Rice and chopsticks. People running around in funny hats. A place where Chinese live. Funny eyes. People are yellow. Men have to wear pony tails. Chinese language. Chinese people are kind of brownish in color. A country in Asia. Rice. I think of funny houses, shoes and the bath tubs. Different color of people.

FIFTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

China has always to me seemed to be a wonderful country to see though I've never been there. I think they are about as

good off as we are. Stretched out eyes. Weird hats. Rice. Poor people. When I think of China, I think of Chinese food. That's about the only thing I think of. I think China is a bad country because they attacked us when we weren't ready. China is a nice country. I don't know much about it but still I like it no matter what. I have heard it is a very clean and nice country. Some people think Chinese are funny, but I don't. It's a real crowded place. I feel that the world isn't big enough, so if some people would not have as many kids there might be more room for all of us. When I think of China, I think of people who are starving and people who have everything they want. Some people don't ever have the things they need. People in China talk differently, but we are all the same. Some people from China are living in the United States. Some people like it here and some don't. China is okay, but I'd hate to live there. I am glad I live in the U.S.A. instead of China. I do not know what I would say if I was in China talking to one of them. I wonder why they look different to us. I suppose we look different to them, too. I think China is very poor. I think of chopsticks and robes. It makes me think of dragons and people with slanted eyes and words that look like scribble. I like China because they wear those funny hats. And I like the way they use chopsticks. A place where on Saturdays and Sundays the red suits vs. the white suits in Karate. And there's no pollution. China is a large country. The Pacific Ocean is on its coast. China is a country in Asia. I feel that if you go to China they will not let you come into that country. Kung Fu and hand-to-hand combat.

SIXTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

It makes me think of panda bears and cherry blossoms. All of the people that live there. Millions of unmodernized people. A country in Asia where many people live. I think of chopsticks. Slanted eyes. The many different customs and values that people believe in. They grow rice. Communists. Friendly to the United States. Rice. Kung Fu. Where children don't have what we have. Their leaders say we have a bad one. Ancient celebrations. Oriental. A communist government. People with pointed eyes. Yellow skin. People with red skins and who eat rice. I think of people eating with chopsticks. They are different colored people and have different customs than we have. Yellow people. China people eat mostly rice. A place where people have funny eyes and eat rice with chopsticks. Black hair. A country where people different from us live. A country with Chinese people pulling carts, wearing long dress or pants, and where Judo and Karati are practiced. People speak Chinese and have slanted eyes. Old and ancient things. Very intelligent people. A communist country. Chopsticks. China plates and stuff are made in China. They wear different clothes and shoes. Chairman Mao and Communists. It's a foreign country. An overpopulated part of Asia that is communist. Kung Fu. Confucius. There is a different language. Pandas are very common. A communist country in Asia. People with slanted eyes. Yellow people. Rice.

INVESTIGATORS' INTERPRETATIONS OF CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA

With respect to the concept of CHINA as a nation of the world, many erroneous comments were noted in the responses of children at the primary level. As the age of the children increased, their cognitive structures of China approached greater realism but still revealed many misconceptions and considerable stereotyping.

Although the primary level children were asked to comment on CHINA immediately following their comments on THE WORLD, many of the children at this age level related China to PLATES and DISHES rather than a place within the world. Questioning further a child who responded with the comment, "China's under the dirt," The child indicated that one can reach China by digging through the earth. The child who responded with the comment that the people there WEAR ROUND HATS, upon further questioning said his father had brought one home. His father, in this case, had served with the American armed forces in Vietnam; and the hat that he had brought home was from Vietnam. There were many comments which revealed confusion of China with Vietnam and other nations. A third grade child who indicated that his dad got shot by them was referring to his father's service as an American soldier in Vietnam. A fifth grade boy commented that China was a bad country because of their surprise attack on the United States. Further questioning revealed that this boy had seen the movie, TORA, TORA, TORA, in which the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was depicted; and he associated China and Japan as one.

Comments such as FUNNY EYES, CHOPSTICKS, RICE and DIFFERENT appeared throughout all levels. The impact of television on

elementary children was apparent as the comment KUNG FU was given several times, appearing more often at the upper elementary levels.

There were also positive comments, such as that of the fifth grader who stated that it is a NICE COUNTRY, and the sixth grader who commented that China is FRIENDLY TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF INDIA

The following are typical responses made to the word INDIA:

FIRST GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Lots of Indians around Vermillion. They were the ones that discovered India -- a place where Indians live. They live in kind-of shaped domes or tepees or whatever. Indians. Brown faces. Spots on clothes (decoration). I like them. There are Indians. People. Animals. It's a state. It's in the world. White people take their land. Feathers in head bands. Indian country. Red wool. Feathers. They paint pictures and they live in houses, but they eat different kinds of food. Bows and arrows. Indian tepees. There's the Indian elephant, the Bengal tiger, sea snake, Indian rhinoceros -- I don't know much about India. Go around doing rain dances. Helping pilgrims. There's people who wear funny hats. Points on the hats. Squiggley shape. Washington. Love. Palm trees grow there. Poison snakes. People can do different things. Like a state. Part of the world, too. I think it's a long ways away. People grow food. Town with people who have friends. A country named India. Daddy went there once. Indians. Speak about the same. Big country. Whole lot of work.

SECOND GRADERS' COMMENTS:

It is a state. A country. Big city. Where Indians live. They wear different clothing. It is hot. My teacher went to India. Different kinds of dresses. Peddle cars. My teacher has told us about India. They sell things outside. Marks on their head. Columbus sailed to America, and the Indians met him. A place. Indians. People are starving. Sort of like Africa with many kinds of animals. Where Indians live. They are not like us--some are black and some are white. Missionary stories. UNICEF films were at our school. Snakes. Big hats with one feather. Indians have colored faces. Don't have clothes like we do. Lots of people. In South Dakota we have Indian dances. Headbands with feathers. Buildings. Huts. Like an island. Talk a different language. A state. A place where Indians live. Tents. The Pilgrims discovered America and the Indians lived there.

THIRD GRADERS' COMMENTS:

India is in the continent Asia. In India they think when you die you come back as a cow. Black skin. Jungle. Animals. Snake charmers. My mother has friends there, and one gave her two spoons. My mother gave one to me. Tigers. Lions. Elephants. Wildlife. People. India is a very beautiful place. India has starving people. They grow tea. They do not kill cows because they think they will be animals when they die and they think cows are neat. People die because they don't have enough food. They don't have food like we do. Some in India have food. India has elephants and jungles and all kinds of

stuff. We saw a film about India. India is a place where people are very poor. I would feel bad if I had to walk to India, because I would have to walk on the Atlantic Ocean, and I would drown. Indians live in India. (Student was referring to American Indians.) A place where people are starving. I know that India is pretty large and that people died because they did not have enough food. A country in Asia close to the border of the Indian Ocean. India is a place where lots of people wear fancy clothes. India is a good city or country. Black people. A state. Grass huts. India is in Asia. India is beside China. The black people in India are very hungry in all places. Columbus. It is kind of big. Indian people. Black people. Canoes. Tepees. War paint. Bows and arrows.

FOURTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

A place in Africa. Indians live there. India is a very big place. They have a different language. They don't have much food. Some of the kids are starving. India is in Asia. India has a lot of fighting. India is by the Arabian Sea. A place where people need more food. Dark colored people. Poor. Many hot days. Hot weather. Different colored skin. I would like to ride an Indian elephant. I would like to go on a tiger hunt. People with talent for crafts. A lot of animals. I think of Indians. Pretty. Don't have much food. They have different coins. Dark people live there. Cowboys and Indians. The Indian Ocean. India is very hot. India is in Asia. We sell grain to India. India has a nuclear bomb. India is one of the countries that don't have enough food. They need help.

Not enough food. India has millions and millions of starving people. Poor and hungry people. A person carrying a pot of water on his head. I think of people living in huts. A place by the Indian Ocean. They live in different houses. They eat different kinds of food. A country in Asia. Bows and arrows. A country that is very crowded. Hot. A country in Asia. A very crowded country in the southern part of Asia.

FIFTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Starving people. Poverty. Superstitious. People are black. Farming is popular. Religious ceremonies. People live in small villages. It is a hot place and strange place to live, but the people who live there would probably say our country is strange. I would like to see it sometime when I grow up. I think the people in India are pretty stupid because they don't eat the cow. Meat is a very important food in our diet so I think they should eat the cow. India means really nothing to me. Things come to my mind that people don't get much to eat there. They are short on things. It is in Asia. A place of starving, slavery, and short lives. Hard lives, sad lives; not lives like ours. Warm climate. People talk in different languages and dress differently. Poor people with hardly anything to eat. And they work hard. People in India have different skin than we do. They have brown skin, but that doesn't mean they are different than we are. They have hair like us and a body like us, too. I would like to go to that city (India) and see things and meet different people. To go and eat at some restaurant. I think of the jungles when I

think about India. I get a spooky feeling. I think about the animals. India reminds me of the Indians. I would like to talk to a real Indian chief. Some people in India ride elephants and some drive cars like we do. People in India look like Indians in the United States. I think of negro people who live in old tattered huts and some people who live like royal people and the others who serve as their slaves for a living. I would just hate to live in India. I don't know why, but I just would. But I would really like to learn about it. A lot of starving people. Bazaars instead of shopping centers.

SIXTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Ladies with brightly colored cloth draped around them. Carrying water jugs on their head. Flies and disease. Hungry children. Millions of famine-stricken people. The capital is New Delhi. People are dressed in long robes and turbans. A part of Asia. Elephants. Hindu religion. A hot place. Poor, starving people. Kids killing rats and eating them. A poor country. A country in Asia that has a caste system. People who are very poor and don't have many clothes. People with dark skins. Starving people and kids. Dry. Starving people. People don't have enough to eat. A place where people are different. Carrying baskets on their heads. Where starving people live. A poor country with a very high population. A place where Indians live and train elephants. They are not rich. Overcrowded. They have an atomic bomb. People are dying of disease. A country bordering the Indian Ocean. It is overpopulated.

They believe in reincarnation. Buddha lived there. Hot climate. A country where people believe in reincarnation. Many believe in Buddhism. One of the world's longest rivers runs through it. A lot of people. No food. Less people. Elephants. Many people live together. It is mostly populated by Indians. Lots of poor people. Lots of diseases. It is crowded with not enough food. Hindu religion. Where women make jewelry. A place where there are many people. People have dark skins.

INVESTIGATORS' INTERPRETATIONS OF CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF INDIA

At the primary and intermediate levels the children seemed to have a great number of misconceptions about INDIA. The first graders' comments revealed that nearly all the children at that level think of the NATIVE AMERICAN when they hear the term, INDIA. One very interesting exception is the boy at that level who seemed quite knowledgeable on India. He responded, "There's the Indian elephant, the Bengal tiger, sea snake, Indian rhinoceros--I don't know much about India." He seemed to have a greater amount of knowledge on India than confidence of that knowledge. There is only one reference to the Native American at the upper elementary level as a fifth grader commented that he would like to talk to a real Indian chief.

The children at the upper elementary level commented often about the problems of STARVATION and OVERPOPULATION facing India. A fifth grade child sees one solution to this problem if the people would realize that eating their cows is a much better procedure than worshipping them. The comment, "Meat is a very important food in

our diet, so I think they should eat the cow," seems very reasonable coming from a child who grew up in "beef country," U.S.A. Nowhere is the comment made that if the people of the world would eat soybeans rather than cattle, the proteins produced per acre of arable land could be multiplied many times over.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF NIGERIA

The following are typical responses made to the word NIGERIA:

FIRST GRADERS' COMMENTS:

My dad went there, but I don't know about it. Nope. I don't know. Cars and trucks in the town. Long ways away. I never heard of it. Homes. I don't know. Kind. Nigeria! What's that? Never heard of that one! The people and food are different. More people. I haven't heard of it before. Omaha. Peasant. Houses. Jesus. It's square. What does that mean? I saw it as a glove. Desert. There's the anaconda--a squeezing snake. North or east from China. It has rivers, bridges, cars, stores. They eat different food. A scientist's word. They're poor people. I don't know what that means.

SECOND GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Medicine. Does that have Indians? Country in Africa--a man came in to talk with us in first grade. Eskimos. Trains. Different people. Never heard of that. Don't know. Night--sounds like night. That's hard. They have a lot of other things that are different from (the home town of the speaker). Different toys that they give to their children. Is that a place? I think of lot of people live there. There's a lot of water that make's a lot of noise. I don't know. (over

50% of the responses were similar to this one.) I think I saw it on television. My daddy was there in the war. It sounds pretty, doesn't it. It's green with trees and grass in the summertime. There's lots of trees, and grass, and people, and animals.

THIRD GRADERS' COMMENTS:

Missionaries who go to preach. Houses. Friends. Black people. I saw a movie that these men were cutting grass. It is very, very hot there. It is in Africa. Nigeria is a foreign country. Different colored people. The missionaries in all the churches in Nigeria. The people of Nigeria are dying of thirst in some places. Nigeria is in Africa. Negroes. Dry. Nigeria is a place where many people live. They build houses and work. They do not have school. A country in Africa with many black people, jungles and many, many wild animals. I think Nigeria is close to where BORN FREE (a television program from one of the national networks) is being filmed. I would like to see what Nigeria is like. I think it would be fun. Nigeria is a place where people are very nice to other people. Nigeria is in Africa and last year a woman came and showed us stuff from Nigeria. They make tables and they wear ear rings. They use rocks. It's one of the most largest country in Africa. I think it's a pretty country. I feel like it is a big country. In Nigeria there are a lot of animals. There are a lot of black people there, and it has a lot of jewels. It is in Africa, and Africa makes me think of elephants. I feel that it is a place where it is

hot so I would probably like to live there because I like hot places. Missionaries. A place in Africa where there are elephants, snakes, and giraffes.

FOURTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

A place in Africa. It has many trees and animals. Nigeria is a big place. A state in Africa. Where elephants live. Nigeria is in Africa. Nigeria is by the ocean. I think of it as kind of a jungle with colored people. Hot days. Poor people. Starving people without homes or clothes. A little country. It looks weird. People live there. It is a place in Africa near Niger. Wild animals roam. A country. A funny name. In Africa. Nigeria is on the coast of Africa. A small country in Africa. They do not have clothes like us. A grass hut. I think of black women weaving rugs. A place in Africa. Someplace in Africa. A state where colored people live. They eat different food than we do. A country in Africa. Lots of wild animals. People don't have much food or clothing. Nigerians live in Nigeria. It has many diseases and is poor. Animals run free. Wild animals. Dark skin. A country. Born Free. I think animals probably live there. Nigeria is a country in Africa. Lots of poor people live there.

FIFTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

I don't know what it means, but I do think about how many words I don't know. I have not even heard of it before. Nigeria is different from other countries because it sometimes never rains there for a long time. I have no thought on Nigeria because I don't know much about it, but it has ten cities.

I think Nigeria would be a hot part of Africa. Nigeria is in Africa. I have hardly ever heard of it before so I don't know much about it. All I can say is that parts of it are nice and other parts are ugly. That is the way it is everywhere. I think about the jungles and the wild animals. I would be scared to go there. But then I think about the plains, and I really wouldn't mind going there. I think about the black people, the piece of cloth they wear. I have never heard of Nigeria, but I'm sure it's a nice country in Africa. Nigeria has lots of trees and plants and also animals. But they don't kill the animals; they tame them like the elephants to pick up logs. I don't know about Nigeria that much. All I do know is that it has people in it. I know it is in Asia but nothing else. The Niger River. I think of black people. They are just like us and just like anybody. Hot climate. Not very fancy. I never heard of it! (frequent comment) Nigeria is in Africa. It isn't a large country, but it can get hot there. Nigeria is a place I haven't heard of. I think they ride on animals and live in huts. Where Tarzan lives. He swings on vines and attacks natives. He dives off cliffs.

SIXTH GRADERS' COMMENTS:

It's in Africa. People living in ancient African ways. Nigeria's capital is Lagos and it is in Africa. A country in Africa. Like India, it is a hot and dry country. In the lower part of Africa. Starvation and drought. A place where children are starving. The people have to dig into the garbage to get some food. A hot country in Africa. Sickness and disease. In the jungle. A country in Africa. Very hot

with a lot of rain forests. People running around half naked and getting chased by a lion. A place where starving children die. Jungles and snakes. Grass huts. Nigeria is like a jungle with animals. Green country with lots of wild animals. Poor, dry country. A country with poor people. Not much food with raggy clothes. Dark people live there. It is hot and very poor. Natives. It's by Kano. Uncivilized. Jungle. It has lots of wildlife. Very hot and dry. A country in Africa. I think of a warm climate. A good fishing continent. A country in Africa where many blacks live. Tropical jungles. Not so civilized. Blacks. The people have dark skin. A lot of black people. Very hot and dry. Many people. Grass huts. Native tribes and people. Different languages. Missionaries. Negroes. Black people. Starvation. Disease. Women aren't included in hardly anything. People make gee. A majority of the people are black. Where a lot of wild animals live.

INVESTIGATORS' INTERPRETATIONS OF CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF NIGERIA

There seemed to be less understanding of NIGERIA than of THE WORLD, CHINA or INDIA by children at all grade levels. The comment, "I don't know," was given by nearly half of the children at the primary level. When children at this level were questioned further as to the meaning of their responses, it was apparent that some responses did not relate to place in the world. One child who had been receiving help from his teacher with the "N" sound in phonetics related that NIGERIA sounded like night. Another child, upon hearing the word NIGERIA stated, "It sounds pretty." The boy

who commented that his daddy was there in the war was found to mean Vietnam upon further questioning.

Many children at the intermediate level related Nigeria to Africa at large. The child who commented about the jewels of Nigeria was referring to the South Africa rather than Nigeria.

Some of the children had learned about Nigeria as a result of a project by their church to help the people of that country. Comments referring to missionaries were made by children from one particular community. A fifth grade child commented that the people were black but that they were just like us. The Judeo-Christian ethic was revealed here as this child, upon further questioning, indicated that people should treat others in the same way they wanted to be treated.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary and recommendations are based on the collected data and subsequent analysis of this study as described in this report. The terms the world, China, India and Nigeria have various meanings to different individuals. Generalizations from this study to others should be considered in light of this variance.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions that first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade children in selected schools of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota hold toward the world, China, India and Nigeria.

Conclusions for this study are based upon the limitations stated earlier in this report. Considering these limitations, the following conclusions seem to be justified by the findings of this study:

1. In order to plan appropriate learning experiences, teachers and curriculum specialists need to find out what children already know.

2. Young children, especially those in the primary grades, described the words mostly in reference to their immediate environment such as their own home, school and peer group experiences.

3. It appears that the media form of television plays an important role in the perception of children. This is evidenced by the number of expressions stated by the children that appear on several prime-time television programs.

4. As children move into the intermediate grades, there appears to be a movement toward objective understanding of others. However, stereotyped images still are present as evidenced by their statements. This maturation parallels the stages of development reported by Piaget.

5. Throughout every grade level children exhibited stereotypes and lack of understanding of the words.

6. Identical perceptual statements appeared frequently in the children's responses.

7. Children in private schools appeared to relate many of their perceptions based upon their religious training.

8. There were wide variations of perceptual statements made by children within grade levels as well as among the various grade levels.

With the current emphasis on intercultural and international understanding, it is vitally important to continue looking for ways to prepare children for their role in the global society. Additional

study in regard to children's perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes that would contribute to the present literature might include:

1. Conducting a study to determine where children learn about the world, China, India and Nigeria.

2. Developing instruments to measure changes in perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes.

3. Conducting a longitudinal study to record changes in children's intercultural or international perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes.

4. Conducting a study to determine the methods most conducive for children to learn about international topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigators make the following recommendations for educators to consider:

1. Educators should recognize that children have stereotyped images of people and countries of the world.

2. Educators need to be knowledgeable about the Piagetian stages of intellectual development which children move through toward concept formation.

3. Educators should become aware of the types of television programming viewed by children and of the information included in the programming.

4. Educators should help children become aware of values different from their own.

5. Educators should help children become aware of the cultural diversity within the world and to appreciate this diversity.

6. Educators should attempt to develop course materials, units, or individual learning materials dealing with international/ intercultural topics appropriate for the maturation levels of the children.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ELEMENTARY STUDENT PERCEPTUAL SURVEY SHEET

Elementary Student

Perceptual Survey Sheet

Boy_____Girl_____

Grade Level _____

Name of School_____

City _____

Directions: We have written four words on this paper. Please read the four words silently to yourself. If you cannot pronounce one or all of them, please ask your teacher to help you. If there is a world map in your room, you may wish to have the teacher point out the locations of the countries.

Following each word is a space for you to write your answers. Read the first word. What does the word mean to you? What comes into your mind when you read the word? Tell us what you know or feel about the word. Please print your answers. There is no right or wrong answer for each word. Now read the second, third and fourth words. Do the same as you did with the first word.

1. The World

2. China

3. India

4. Nigeria

APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS

Dear Elementary School Teacher:

If you are administering the perceptual survey sheet to your class, you may wish to consider the following points.

1. You may wish to read the directions out loud for the children to insure that they understand the directions.

2. You may wish to pronounce each of the four words to the children.

3. You may wish to locate each of the countries on the world map so the children have an idea of the location of each.

4. Please have the children print their responses.

5. Make sure that each child completes the information section at the top right of the sheet. This will assist us in the final interpretation. For example, there will probably by many third grade classes involved in this study. We will have to separate all of the third grade papers from the sixth grade papers.

6. The children's responses can be in the form of single words, short phrases or even sentences. We would suggest that you mention to the children that we are interested in their feelings, perceptions and knowledge of each word. There is no right or wrong response. THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR THEM TO KNOW.

7. The children should be told that they should only write in the provided space. That is why it is important that you ask the children to give some thought to their responses before they start writing.

8. Please, in no way attempt to give them any suggestions of what to say. We are interested in what comes into their minds. Maybe they have never heard of the countries.

9. Thank the children for us. We are excited about this study, and it should provide some worthwhile information for all elementary school educators.

10. Place the response sheets into the self-addressed, pre-stamped envelope and mail it to the School of Education at the University of South Dakota.

11. If you are interested in receiving the outcomes of this study, please notify us.

12. We thank you for your cooperation and kind assistance.

Robert W. Wood
Charles E. Eicher

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